

A Commonplace Calendar

While patriots laid the foundations of political, economic, and spiritual destiny, the rank and file of humble citizens lived in the realm of Commonplace. For them the history of 1838 consisted of daily work and events of personal significance.

New Year's Day. The weather was warmer "than ever before felt in the country at this season of the year." A warm rain stripped the earth of snow and entirely cleared the ice from the channel of the Mississippi. One enterprising citizen "was busily engaged in prairie breaking" near Dubuque.

Wednesday, January 3. Governor Dodge approved a law declaring that all Territorial roads should be sixty-six feet wide. ♦ A Literary Association, formed on the lyceum principle, was organized at Dubuque.

Thursday, January 4. The House of Representatives indefinitely postponed consideration of a bill to prevent Sabbath breaking.

Saturday, January 6. Mrs. Martha Rorer, wife of David Rorer, "a lady estimable and exemplary in every relation of life", died in Burlington.

Monday, January 8. Robert Baneford, John

Vanetia, and John Blaycock were named by law to establish a road from Bloomington to the "forty mile point on the Cedar river" by way of Geneva, Moscow, and Rochester.

Thursday, January 11. Ira Pingry and Mary Zimmerman, both of Big Maquoketa, were married.

Friday, January 12. John Pearson's new barn in Burlington burned, "the work, doubtless, of an incendiary." The barn "was the best in the Territory, built after the manner of Pennsylvania barns, and just finished last fall." ♦ The Territorial legislature dissolved the bonds of matrimony between Louisa Ann Sibley and William T. Sibley, and Louisa Ann was "restored to all the rights and privileges of a *femme sole*."

Saturday, January 13. The weather continued fair, "having much the appearance of Indian Summer".

Monday, January 15. A statute provided for the incorporation of Dubuque Seminary for the education of both sexes in science and literature. The legislature also granted a divorce to Lucinda Jones and Abraham Jones of Burlington. Lucinda was given control of the three youngest children — Betsy Ann, John Wesley, and Sarah Malinda.

Friday, January 19. The Territorial legislature authorized the organization of Philandrian Col-

lege at Denmark, and seminaries at Fort Madison, West Point, Burlington, Mount Pleasant, Augusta, Farmington, and at a rural community in Des Moines County.

Tuesday, January 23. The lyceum at the courthouse in Dubuque was open to the public.

Thursday, January 25. The librarian respectfully requested that all books out of the Territorial Library be "returned as early as possible."

Saturday, January 27. Though the Mississippi River was frozen at Prairie la Port, it was still running at Dubuque. The ground was covered with about two inches of snow, which brightened the prospects for better sleighing. At Burlington the season was unpleasant and very changeable. The river was still open, though sometimes so full of ice that only Parry and his canoe dared to "venture upon its partible surface".

Tuesday, January 30. The city charter of Burlington was accepted "by a very large majority." ♦ A cold wave struck Dubuque. The river froze solid enough to be crossed with safety. If the zero weather should continue, "jolly fellows" planned to go sleigh riding on the river.

Wednesday, January 31. The coldest night of the winter at Burlington. Though the river was still open, it was "jam full of ice".

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